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## Review

### Panasonic Lumix DMC-FX9

\$829

★★★☆☆



**THE LOW-DOWN** The Panasonic Lumix DMC-FX9 digital camera has a 6 megapixel sensor and a 3x Leica zoom lens. The focal length of the lens is 35-105mm film equivalent.

The FX9 is small — 25mm thick — with a face area the same size as a credit card. Construction is metal. There is a 50mm LCD screen, which is the only viewfinder the camera has. As with all such pseudo viewfinders, it is impossible to use in bright sunlight.

The camera has image stabilisation and in use the so-called Mega Optical Image Stabiliser works extremely well. A digital- photography novice used the FX9 to take consistently good pictures indoors with the ISO set to 200 and without using the flash.

Exposure, white balance and focus are spot-on and the camera is as responsive as a film camera, with no suggestion of shutter lag.

The FX9 has switchable aspect ratios of 4:3 (the full sensor area), 3:2 (the proportions of a standard photo print) and 16:9 (the aspect ratio of a widescreen television). Pictures taken at 16:9 and dropped straight into a TV slideshow creation program produced excellent results. Only at 4:3 are the full 6 million pixels used — the alternative aspect ratios are achieved by cropping the image in camera.

Movies taken with the FX9 are good enough to display on a large-screen TV, but it is no substitute for a video camera.

**LIKE THIS** The combination of Leica lens, image stabilisation and 6MP sensor produces images with superb detail. The selectable aspect ratio is definitely an attractive feature for anyone interested in making TV slide shows.

**DISLIKE THAT** The absence of an optical viewfinder is a pity, limiting the usefulness of this lovely little camera.

Picture noise is noticeable at ISO200.

**PARTING SHOT** The Panasonic Lumix FX9 is expensive compared with other cameras in the same class, but it does have the image stabilisation, which is uncommon in such a compact unit. For anyone wanting a point-and-shoot camera with some useful features, the FX9 is highly recommended.